

Message Text

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64

ACTION ARA-17

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 AID-20 CIAE-00 DODE-00 HEW-08 INR-10

NSAE-00 PA-03 PRS-01 RSC-01 SCA-01 USIE-00 INRE-00

SS-15 NSC-10 NSCE-00 IO-12 PM-09 CCO-00 SSO-00 SR-02

ORM-03 SCS-03 RSR-01 /117 W

----- 084472

O 162215 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3772

CINCSOUTH IMMEDIATE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SAN JOSE 1325

E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SWEL, MILI, CS

SUBJECT: NATURAL DISASTER: ARENAL EARTHQUAKE OF 4/15/73

REF: SAN JOSE 1309

SUMMARY: SEVERE DAMAGE REPORTED FROM RECENT EARTHQUAKE
AND NUMBER OF DEATHS AND MISSING NOT YET FIRM. ACTION
REQUESTED: USCINCSOUTH REQUESTED TO DISPATCH A HELI-
COPTER TO ASSIST IN RELIEF OPERATIONS.

1. I HAVE TODAY MADE DETERMINATION UNDER PROVISION
2 FAM060 THAT THE DAMAGE CAUSED BY THE ARENAL EARTHQUAKE
ON 4/14/73 IS OF SUFFICIENT SEVERITY AND MAGNITUDE TO
WARRANT DISASTER RELIEF AS CONSISTENT WITH U. S. FOREIGN
POLICY GOALS.

2. REQUEST USCINCSOUTH BE ALERTED TO NEED FOR
EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE. SPECIFICALLY, GOCR HAS REQUESTED
AND I ENDORSE REQUEST FOR A HELICOPTER TO ASSIST IN
RELIEF OPERATIONS. HELICOPTER IS NECESSARY TO OVERFLY
ISOLATED COMMUNITIES WHICH HAVE BEEN CUT OFF FROM
ALL GROUND TRANSPORT AND ALSO TO ASSESS FLOOD DANGER
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TO SURROUNDING AREA PRESENTED BY BLOCKAGE OF THE CHIKUITO RIVER BY LANDSLIDES. ADDITIONAL FUNDS FOR ASSISTANCE TO REFUGEES MAY ALSO BE NECESSARY OUT OF THE \$25,000 CONTINGENCY FUND.

3. THE STRONG EARTHQUAKE FELT ON APRIL 14 WAS CENTERED AT LATITUDE 10 DEGREES 30 MINUTES NORTH LONGITUDE 84 DEGREES 53 MINUTES WEST APPROXIMATELY AT SOUTHERN END OF LAKE ARENAL. SINCE THE ORIGINAL QUAKE MORE THAN TWENTY ADDITIONAL TREMORS HAVE BEEN FELT IN THE AREA. REPORTS ON DEATH AND DESTRUCTION STILL INCOMPLETE BUT AT LEAST 21 PERSONS DEAD (INCLUDING SEVERAL VICTIMS WHOSE BODIES HAVEN' T YET BEEN RECOVERED) AND 17 WOUNDED. NO U. S. CITIZENS INCLUDED AMONG DEAD OR WOUNDED. TILORAN, THE LARGEST CITY NEAR QUATOUJ WAS HEAVILY DAMAGED BUT THE MOST SERIOUS LOSS OF LIFE APPEARS TO HAVE OCCURRED IN THE SURROUNDING SETTLEMENTS. MANY OF THESE SETTLEMENTS REMAIN ISOLATED BECAUSE OF LANDSLIDES, UPHEAVAL, ETC. WHICH HAVE DESTROYED LAND COMMUNICATION.

4. KNOWN REFUGEES FROM THE AREA CURRENTLY AMOUNT TO 1,450 PEOPLE WHO ARE BEING HOUSED AND FED IN TEMPORARY CENTERS IN TILORAN, ABANGARES AND SANTA ELENA. THE GOCR THROUGH THE RURAL GUARD AT THE INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL ASSISTANCE AND THE RED CROSS HAVE BEEN ABLE TO PROVIDE THE MAJORITY OF THE ASSISTANCE NEEDS TO DATE, BUT EVOLVING SITUATION MAY WARRANT SPOT USG ASSISTANCE OR AT LEAST AN APPROPRIATE CASH CONTRIBUTION TO GOCR EMERGENCY FUND. CRS IS MAKING EMERGENCY FOOD AVAILABLE TO REFUGEE CENTERS.

5. FURTHER INFORMATION ASAP.
VAKY

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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